

# Broader, vaguer, weaker: The evolving ideology of the Caucasus Emirate leadership

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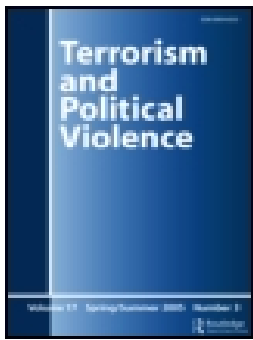
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## Broader, vaguer, weaker: The evolving ideology of the Caucasus Emirate leadership

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### ABSTRACT

In October 2007, veteran Chechen field commander Dokka Umarov proclaimed the formation of the Caucasus Emirate (IK), formalising the victory of the North Caucasus insurgency's Islamist wing over its nationalist-separatists. During Umarov's time as leader, the North Caucasus experienced sustained violence and the IK claimed responsibility for multiple terrorist attacks in and beyond the region. However, despite the importance of ideology in understanding insurgent behaviour, the IK's ideology and Umarov's role in shaping it remain understudied. Using Social Movement Theory's concept of framing to analyse Umarov's communiqués throughout his lengthy tenure (June 2006–September 2013), this article identifies three distinct phases in Umarov's ideological positioning of the insurgency: nationalist-jihadist (June 2006–October 2007); Khattabist (October 2007–late 2010); and partially hybridised (late 2010–September 2013). The article contributes to debates over typologies of jihadist actors by highlighting the difficulties in applying them to the North Caucasus and provides a clearer understanding of the IK's ideological transformation and the limits to its engagement with external actors. The article also illustrates that weakness was a key factor in explaining that transformation and identifies several avenues for research that could further enhance our understanding of the IK's ideology and the role it plays.

### KEYWORDS

Caucasus Emirate; framing; ideology; insurgency; North Caucasus; terrorism

## Introduction

In October 2007, veteran Chechen field commander Dokka Umarov abolished the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI), a self-proclaimed state in southern Russia that he had led since June 2006, and replaced it with the more explicitly jihadist<sup>1</sup> Caucasus Emirate (IK). In doing so, he formalised the victory of the insurgency's Islamist wing over nationalist-separatists in its historic Chechen core. During Umarov's time as leader, the North Caucasus experienced sustained violence, and attacks that fit virtually any definition of terrorism—the contested nature of which is well documented<sup>2</sup>—have been perpetrated in and beyond the region and claimed by the IK. Russia, the U.S., and the UK have all proscribed the IK as a terrorist organisation.

Ideology is important for understanding insurgent behaviour—helping shape identity, legitimise actions, and mobilise support—yet the IK's ideology and Umarov's role in

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forming it remain understudied. Existing work largely neglects the post-proclamation evolution of that ideology, and that which exists often relies on secondary sources and typologies of ideologies not fully compatible with the North Caucasus. Using Social Movement Theory's (SMT) concept of framing, this article analyses an extensive body of Umarov's communiqués spanning his tenure as leader (from his ascension to the ChRI presidency in June 2006 through to his death in September 2013) to assess how he positioned the movement ideologically, as a first step to addressing these shortcomings. In doing so, it identifies three distinct phases: nationalist-jihadist (June 2006–October 2007); Khattabist (October 2007–late 2010); and partially hybridised (late 2010–September 2013). The article thus contributes to existing typologies of jihadist ideologies by highlighting the problems that arise in applying to the North Caucasus concepts drawn from the study of predominantly Arabic-speaking groups in Muslim-majority countries, provides a clearer understanding of the limits of the IK's ideological transformation and its engagement with external actors, and illustrates the ways in which leaders such as Umarov—who do not necessarily enjoy strong ideological credentials—justify the conflicts they are engaged in. It also suggests that weakness was a key factor in driving change and identifies several avenues for research that could enhance our understanding of the IK's ideology and the role it plays.

### **Assessing the contemporary insurgency's ideological evolution**

The contemporary North Caucasus insurgency has its origins in the First and Second Chechen Wars (1994–1996 and 1999–2002). The ideology of the Chechen leadership during the first war was predominantly nationalist-separatist, with Islam playing only a subsidiary, instrumental role.<sup>3</sup> However, the region-wide process of post-Soviet Islamic revival occurred in Chechnya in the context of—and was accelerated by—war,<sup>4</sup> and a loose Islamist camp formed within the separatist movement. Strengthened by financial patronage channelled through foreign ideologists and fighters and the simplicity of their message, this camp repeatedly challenged the authority of ChRI President Aslan Maskhadov,<sup>5</sup> with the second war ultimately “propell[ing] Islamism into dominating the resistance.”<sup>6</sup> Non-Chechen groups played an increasingly important role; although the influence of foreign actors peaked in the interwar years,<sup>7</sup> by this point the Islamist influence was well established. Maskhadov himself vacillated between appeasing and suppressing the Islamists,<sup>8</sup> but his position was weakened by a lack of external support and the loss of many allies.<sup>9</sup> Maskhadov's death in 2005 arguably “opened the way for the completion of the Islamization process.”<sup>10</sup> His successor, the religiously trained Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev, formalised the regionalisation of the conflict; although his tenure as leader was short—limiting the conclusions that can be drawn about his intentions—Maskhadov's former foreign minister, Ilyas Akhmadov, argues that Sadulayev was probably laying the groundwork for proclaiming the IK.<sup>11</sup> Instead, it was his successor, Umarov, who took that step.

### ***A voice unheard: Obstacles to understanding the IK***

Political violence is about more than just physical acts; it is about representations of violence, ideas, and ideologies.<sup>12</sup> Insurgent groups and leaders devote valuable resources to justifying their actions and communicating their beliefs—testifying to the importance they

attribute to this activity—and subjective interpretations cannot be disregarded or treated as derivative of material variables such as poverty or demographics.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, if terrorism is held to be communicative, it follows that there must be something beyond the act itself to communicate. Ideology can be defined as “a set of interconnected beliefs and their associated attitudes, shared and used by members of a group or population, that relate to problematic aspects of social and political topics” and have “an explicit evaluative and implicit behavioral component.”<sup>14</sup> It helps determine in- and out-groups, which in turn influences behaviour by identifying opponents, rationalising attacks, and legitimising actions.<sup>15</sup> Nor can ideology be dismissed as a purely instrumental ruse to mobilise and socialise members: in a recent critical contribution, Sanin and Wood highlight among the flaws of this argument the basic contradiction that the instrumental use of ideology to attract support or resources presumes those ideologies to be important to those providing such support.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the successful instrumental use of an ideology may rely at least in part on genuine belief by respondents. A logical consequence of this is that even instrumental uses can precede genuine ideological change, as those respondents impact a movement’s internal dynamics—a process arguably seen in the North Caucasus insurgency’s own ideological evolution. While it is important not to overestimate ideology’s explanatory power—individual beliefs and motivations may, for example, differ from official ideologies, ideology can serve as a post factum justification for actions undertaken for other reasons, and groups with similar ideologies can behave differently<sup>17</sup>—ideology is clearly an important factor that must be accounted for in any analysis.

The ideology of the contemporary North Caucasus insurgency, however, has received only limited academic attention, with much of the literature predating or only briefly postdating the proclamation of the IK. This stands in stark contrast to broader issues of Islamic radicalisation and facets of the conflict such as suicide attacks.<sup>18</sup> Several quantitative studies have addressed trends in violent incidents and drawn conclusions about changes in the behaviour of insurgents,<sup>19</sup> but quantitative methods are ill-suited for understanding the ideational component of ideology. Within studies that have examined the articulated ideology of the insurgency, a debate has emerged over the extent of the IK’s engagement with jihadist ideas and movements elsewhere. Some authors argue that the IK is ideologically aligned with Al Qaeda (AQ) and a member of the so-called “global jihadist movement.” Hahn, the most prominent proponent of this view, has—in highly polemical and politicised terms—argued that the IK is ideologically “in lockstep with AQ.”<sup>20</sup> In a more balanced contribution, Sagramoso has asserted that the IK is guided by “similar, if not identical,” beliefs and shares AQ’s “strategic objectives—the establishment of an Islamic state in the Caucasus, to be ruled by Islamic *Shari’ah* law.”<sup>21</sup> Others, however, have viewed the insurgency’s ideological transformation as being significantly more limited. Campana and Ratelle, for example, argued that recruitment and targeting are determined principally by “local imperatives,” with groups focused on survival rather than implementing a grand strategy, while Campana and Ducol show that, although IK websites utilise “global jihadi rhetoric,” they predominantly “reflect local dynamics” and, critically, define their enemies in local terms.<sup>22</sup>

A satisfactory resolution of this debate has been hampered by several shortcomings. Firstly, primary sources have been under-utilised, with many studies drawing on Russian and Western media reporting and databases thereof.<sup>23</sup> In doing so, authors are often assessing variations in reporting on, rather than variations within, the insurgency.

Secondly, where primary sources have been used—with some recent exceptions<sup>24</sup>—they have often been selective rather than comprehensive, divorcing statements from their communicative context. Finally, works originating from within the field of Russian studies have often imported simplistic understandings of jihadist ideologies without critically assessing their applicability. While acknowledging heterogeneity within the global jihadist movement, Sagramoso’s focus on end goals,<sup>25</sup> for example, overemphasises commonalities in jihadist ideologies—such goals frequently being “vague, similar and utopian” and used to justify highly divergent strategies.<sup>26</sup>

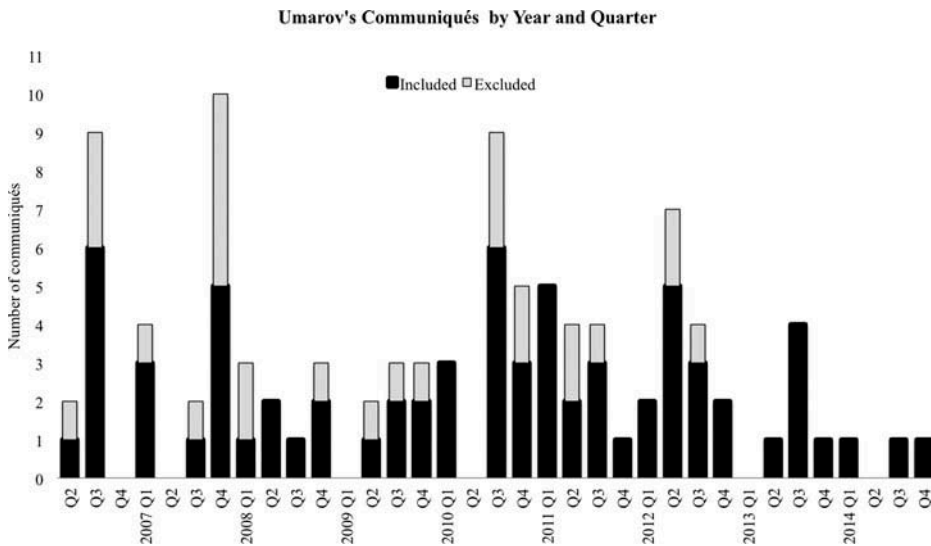
### ***Generating insights through framing***

Interpretations matter: As Benford has argued, “objects have no intrinsic meaning. Rather meaning is negotiated, contested, modified, articulated and rearticulated.”<sup>27</sup> SMT’s concept of framing offers a mechanism for capturing and evaluating such interpretations,<sup>28</sup> and thereby informing discussions of ideology. The three core aspects of Collective Action Frames—those that seek to inspire and legitimise activity—are particularly important. Firstly, diagnostic framing provides the starting point for action by identifying not only what needs to be changed in a given situation, but also who is to blame.<sup>29</sup> Secondly, prognostic framing involves articulating a solution to the diagnosed problem, as well as explaining the superiority of that solution to those proposed by others—some of whom may agree on a diagnosis.<sup>30</sup> Since prognostic framing “tends to produce numerous intramovement-framing disputes,”<sup>31</sup> it can also shed light on disagreements within groups. Finally, since sympathy towards an actor’s goals is insufficient, motivational framing is necessary to transform spectators into participants.<sup>32</sup>

Framing and ideology are not synonymous; indeed, the same frames can be used by competing ideologies.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, frames can originate from and influence ideologies<sup>34</sup> and, therefore, provide insights by capturing how beliefs, values, principles, and objectives are articulated. Framing theory has been successfully applied to a range of Islamist actors<sup>35</sup>; this article represents the first effort to compile the comprehensive corpus of statements needed to understand continuity and change in the IK’s ideological positioning. Umarov served as leader of the insurgency for eight years and oversaw considerable leadership and generational change. Although he was viewed primarily as a military rather than ideological leader, he nevertheless had responsibility for setting the insurgency’s overall ideological direction—a role that is implicitly downplayed through a neglect of his statements.<sup>36</sup> In doing so, he relied on close advisers and leaders within the movement with stronger ideological credentials, with whom he had to negotiate support in order to maintain movement unity. This article will thus shed light on how Umarov sought to position the movement and negotiate competing interests as leader.

### ***Methodological approach***

This article draws on 99 Umarov communiqués identified through searches of four “official” IK websites, threads on the Kavkazchat and Adamalla.com forums, references in RFE/RL reporting, and broader YouTube searches (see [Figure 1](#)). Communiqués of a technical nature, such as those relating to appointments, were excluded; others were omitted if the full text or substantial direct quotations were not available or were never



**Figure 1.** Umarov's communiqués by year and quarter.

published, or if videos were in Chechen and no Russian-language transcripts or subtitles were available. Seventy-one communiqués were thus analysed for this article. While this cannot be presumed to be comprehensive, it provides a substantial body of primary source material from which conclusions can reliably be drawn.

Communiqués were manually coded according to a schema adapted from Holbrook.<sup>37</sup> Transcripts were analysed at the sentence level, with sentences coded iteratively to identify content relating to each core framing task: the undesirability of existing society and past and current grievances (diagnostic); justifications for and advocacy of specific tactics and targets, imposed constraints on the same, and areas and actors identified as allies and enemies (prognostic); and appeals to and criticisms of specific audiences (motivational). Transcripts were analysed in Russian to avoid potential problems stemming from inconsistent translation. Coded sentences were then grouped together; analysis focused on themes and trends rather than specific words or attempting to quantify inherently subjective data (although some basic quantitative information is extracted). Rather than relying on a single analysis of statements, using an iterative, theme-oriented approach helped ensure similar passages received the same codes and the schema captured all key information.

Several limitations to this approach warrant mention. Firstly, motivational framing can offer only partial insights into motivations: Actors may seek to inspire using particular frames, but it does not automatically follow that those frames reflect genuine motivations.<sup>38</sup> Secondly, the exclusion of material that was only available in Chechen, while unavoidable, means it is impossible to draw reliable conclusions about differences between appeals to Chechen versus non-Chechen audiences. Finally, the IK's ideology can only be properly understood by assessing a variety of actors within what is a diverse insurgency. However, a key contention of this article is that Umarov was the movement's primary voice, responsible for setting its overall direction, and conclusions cannot be drawn about the IK's overall



ideology that fail to account for that voice. As such, his communiqués provide a necessary starting point for a more rigorous assessment of the IK's ideology.

### **Phase One: Liberating occupied lands (June 2006–October 2007)**

In his early communiqués as leader, Umarov clearly identified what he viewed as the main problem facing the insurgency and the region: Russia. He repeatedly referred to Russia as an “occupier” and the North Caucasus as occupied territory facing Russia’s “imperial pretensions.”<sup>39</sup> An extensive accompanying grievance narrative accused Russia of “genocide against the civilian population” and “protecting war criminals”<sup>40</sup>—serving to delegitimise Russian rule and legitimise resistance to it. The North Caucasian authorities, by contrast, were routinely relegated to a secondary concern, the “apostates, traitors, cowards, and outcasts” that Russia used to facilitate its presence in the region.<sup>41</sup> For the most part, Umarov neglected to articulate a separate grievance narrative towards them as he sought to deny them the status of an independent party to the conflict. Actors beyond Russia’s borders, meanwhile, were a distinctly tertiary concern, with references focusing on the West’s failure to support Chechen independence. Umarov thus accused the West of failing to oppose Russia’s actions in the Caucasus because it needed Russia’s oil and gas, and of reducing Chechnya to a bargaining chip:

If the Russians refuse them something, they remember Chechnya. After they receive what they need, they take Chechnya off the agenda.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, he demonstrated deep disillusionment with the West, without elevating it to the status of an enemy or undermining the focus on Russia as the core problem. Umarov’s medium-term goals were clear and flowed naturally from this prioritisation, calling for “driving the occupier from the Caucasus” and fighting “until Russia clears our lands of the presence of its criminal armies.”<sup>43</sup> Independence was a clearly defined goal, even if the composition of an independent Caucasus was left undefined save for a vague stipulation that it would be governed by sharia.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, Umarov pledged to expand military operations beyond the Caucasus, while limiting this expansion to military targets on the grounds that Russians “are in an abject, enslaved state” and therefore not culpable for state policy.<sup>45</sup>

### **Religion as a unifying force**

Umarov at first struggled to incorporate the expanded constituency he inherited, referencing predominantly Chechen concerns and rights. Thus, in his maiden communiqué, he insisted that the ChRI was, “from a legal perspective,” an independent state, without explaining how this legitimacy applied to the broader region.<sup>46</sup> However, one thing more than any other undergirded his efforts to accommodate this larger audience: religion. Thus, in July 2006, he spoke of the “great significance” of Caucasians being Muslim and accused Russia of:

fighting against Islam. Mosques are closed; Muslim women are kidnapped and tortured. They humiliate believers, abase religion.<sup>47</sup>



Later, he appealed to both Chechens and “all the Muslims of the Caucasus,” depicting them as victims of the same mistreatment:

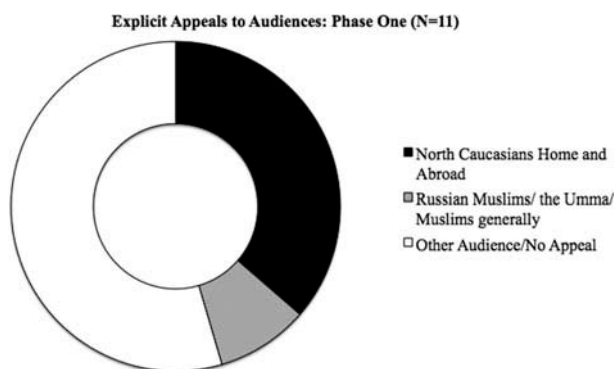
Our religion—Islam—is under attack first and foremost. The enemy knows that it is precisely Islam that is our defence, support, ally, and the source from which the people draws its strengths.<sup>48</sup>

In emphasising the religious nature of the conflict, Umarov relied on three distinct religious concepts. Firstly, he characterised it as a “jihad,” which was “a condition for the liberation of the Caucasus.”<sup>49</sup> Secondly, he depicted jihad as *fard al-ayn*, a religious obligation incumbent on all Muslims, applicable to all ages, those who had left the conflict zone, and those who were unable to join the insurgency.<sup>50</sup> Finally, he appealed to the *umma*, the global community of Muslims, calling on them to remember and support their “brothers and sisters” in the Caucasus.<sup>51</sup> All three concepts were ready-made and readily understood. Jihad and *fard al-ayn* are both widely recognised, and the latter satisfies the motivational need for audiences to be convinced of the legitimacy of their actions.<sup>52</sup> It is also not necessary to “convince Muslims that they belong to an extra-territorial community—the *umma* is a well-established historical concept.”<sup>53</sup> Umarov could therefore call on an existing sense of common identity, rather than having to construct one. Religion and religious concepts had a clear motivational component, permitting Umarov to appeal to a broader group without need for sophisticated rhetoric or complex argumentation—talents that to all appearances were not part of his leadership skill set.

### ***A national-jihadist ideology***

Umarov’s communiqués at the start of his leadership illustrate the problem of relying on religious rhetoric alone in assessing an actor’s ideological orientation. As Gammer has noted, “even the most secularised and westernised nationalists have always regarded Islam as one of the principal components of Chechen identity, tradition and culture,”<sup>54</sup> and the same is true for most North Caucasian ethnic groups. Moreover, Islam is often seen as the only force that has historically been able to unite the region,<sup>55</sup> and in using religion, Umarov followed a path well trodden by previous insurgent leaders seeking regional support. While his characterisation of the conflict as jihad means labelling him as a jihadist was technically correct, this label reveals little of how Umarov sought to position the movement ideologically. In this first phase, Umarov clearly diagnosed the problems facing the insurgency and the region: The North Caucasus, by rights independent, was occupied by a colonial Russia guilty of war crimes and supported only by the worst segments of North Caucasian society. The solution was simple: the liberation of the region and the establishment of an independent state. External actors were peripheral to both problem and solution, with the West little more than a source of disappointment for its failure to support this goal. Of 11 communiqués, four of five explicitly identify an audience focused on North Caucasians at home and abroad, and only one on Muslims outside the region (see Figure 2).

Umarov’s positioning of the movement can thus be seen as distinct from any transnational agenda. The insurgency’s ideology at this time is often referred to as irredentist jihadist,<sup>56</sup> dedicated to liberating historically Islamic lands from non-Muslim occupation and establishing a sharia state.<sup>57</sup> While Umarov’s communiqués during this phase clearly



**Figure 2.** Explicit appeals to audiences: Phase One.

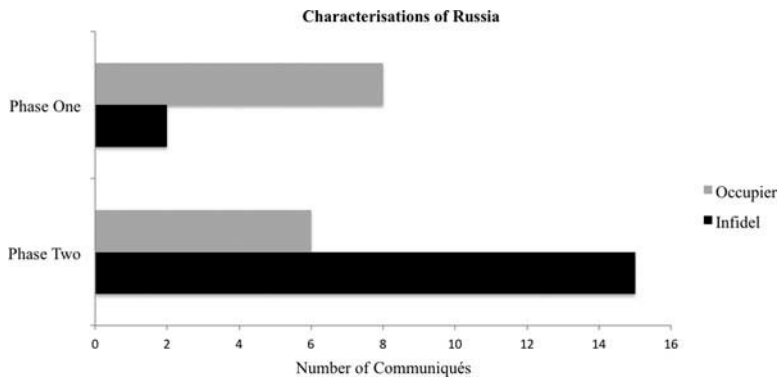
conform to these criteria, this label and existing definitions thereof fail to explore the difference between irredentist jihadism and national-separatism pursued by Islamic actors. Actors as divergent as Chechen nationalist-separatists and AQ were equally dedicated to liberating historically Muslim lands from non-Muslim occupation, and it is the interpretation of, rather than the mere call for, sharia that signals adherence to an extremist interpretation of Islam. A more helpful term for this type of ideology might be national-jihadism: sharing many of the goals of national-separatism—an independent state in which Islam plays a leading role—but differing in the prioritisation of religion as a defining characteristic of both diagnosis and prognosis.<sup>58</sup>

### Phase Two: A transnational struggle against local enemies (October 2007–late 2010)

The proclamation of the IK significantly transformed the way in which the conflict was framed,<sup>59</sup> with a marked change in vocabulary:

I, emir of the Caucasus mujahidin, reject everything connected to the *taghut* [tyrant]. I reject all infidel laws that have been established in the world. I reject all laws and systems that the non-believers have established on Caucasus lands. I reject, I declare illegal, all those names with which non-believers divide Muslims.<sup>60</sup>

Religion became not only the primary defining characteristic of the conflict itself, but also of its protagonists, with Umarov describing Russia predominantly as *kaffir* (infidel) rather than occupier (see Figure 3). He continued to accuse Russia of “genocide,” but now it was genocide against Muslims.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, he rebranded the local authorities as *mur-tady/verootstupniki* (apostates) and *munafiq* (hypocrites).<sup>62</sup> The shift was less pronounced only because of the sheer variety of derisory terms used. The proclamation also introduced a greater focus on affairs outside Russia, with Umarov claiming “the whole world of non-believers and apostates” is fighting against Muslims.<sup>63</sup> Several frames were transformed: the West’s failure to sanction Russia, for example, was recast as being driven by a religious rather than economic agenda.<sup>64</sup> Umarov also sought a closer alignment with the Muslim world, declaring the North Caucasus an “integral part of the Muslim *umma*” and that “all



**Figure 3.** Characterisations of Russia.

who have attacked Muslims, no matter where they are located, are our enemies.”<sup>65</sup> Congratulations on key religious holidays also became a routine feature of communiqués.

At the same time, Umarov became more equivocal in his long-term vision for the region. Instead of advocating the creation of a Caucasian (rather than Chechen) state, he claimed this state already existed but was “occupied by infidels and apostates” and required transformation from *Dar al-Harb*, the abode of war, to *Dar al-Islam*.<sup>66</sup> Implementing sharia became a primary goal, with Umarov repeatedly claiming that people had joined the insurgency for the express purpose of establishing it.<sup>67</sup> This subtle shift in emphasis changed the focus from result (independence) to process (eliminating Russian influence). Umarov pre-emptively rejected accusations he was “creating an abstract, virtual state,” but nevertheless refused to define its borders.<sup>68</sup> He continued to threaten operations beyond the Caucasus, but now with the aim of “conquer[ing] all the historic lands of Muslims.”<sup>69</sup> In early 2010, this expanded to once more include advocating attacks on civilians—a position he was to reverse twice more as leader. Thus, in February 2010, Umarov blamed Russians for their failure to protest Russia’s actions and pledged: “Blood will no longer flow only in our cities and villages. The war will come to their cities.”<sup>70</sup> He repeated this threat a month later following suicide attacks in Moscow.<sup>71</sup> Detailed consideration of the rationale behind suicide attacks falls outside this article’s scope<sup>72</sup>; nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Umarov’s justifications of his position contained a clear motivational component: not only did they seek to displace blame for any attacks onto the targets themselves, but they also appealed to the Russian public not to support Kremlin policies as a means of guaranteeing their own safety.

### ***The limits and circumstances of the transformation***

Umarov’s transformation of how the conflict was framed and the movement was positioned ideologically had evident limits. Religion remained only one characteristic separating Russians and North Caucasians, with “traditions or customs” also highlighted as contributing to a shared identity.<sup>73</sup> During its 2008 war with Russia, for example, Umarov expressed common cause with predominantly Christian Georgia.<sup>74</sup> Umarov’s references to events outside Russia’s borders were mostly superficial, demonstrating little genuine interest and neglecting to establish targeting the West as a goal for North Caucasus insurgents. On the contrary, there was little change in the priorities Umarov articulated, and he continued to accuse Russia of

pursuing a policy of “divide and rule,” using the local authorities merely as “puppets” to govern the Caucasus.<sup>75</sup> In other words, the transformation did not so much alter the insurgency’s priorities but how enemies were defined.

There were also specific circumstances surrounding the proclamation that warrant consideration. A line following the identification of all who attacked Muslims anywhere in the world as the IK’s enemies has featured prominently in discussions of the IK’s ideology:

Our enemy is not only Rusnya [Russia], but also America, England, Israel, all who wage war against Islam and Muslims.<sup>76</sup>

Less widely acknowledged is that there were at least two texts that can be considered versions of the proclamation: one leaked by the IK’s opponents in October 2007—making it hard to draw concrete conclusions about the precise timing—and an “official” version released a month later. The latter document omitted “America, England, Israel.”<sup>77</sup> Although the implications and the overwhelming majority of the document were identical, a decision was made to avoid explicitly identifying these countries as enemies and therefore legitimate targets. Just as significantly, Umarov himself was not the author: Authorship has been attributed to various people, including Movladi Udugov and his relative Isa Umarov<sup>78</sup> and Anzor Astemirov, head of the insurgency’s Kabardino-Balkarian branch<sup>79</sup>; even Umarov later said it was based on the papers of the late influential Chechen field commander Shamil Basayev.<sup>80</sup> The initial references to these countries points to support existing within the insurgency for explicitly designating them enemies, while their redaction suggests such support was not universal—demonstrating the importance of looking at statements in context and considering other actors when drawing conclusions about the IK’s broader ideology.

Further evidence of ideological tensions comes from the time Umarov devoted to defending the proclamation. In December 2007, he issued two lengthy statements responding to a meeting of the insurgency’s representatives abroad that criticised the proclamation, accusing participants of “open mocking of Jihad and sharia” and being removed from “the reality of jihad.”<sup>81</sup> In an effort to delegitimise their opposition, Umarov claimed it was “difficult to count them as Muslims” and warned that anyone who “tries to propagate and impose democracy will be regarded as an apostate.”<sup>82</sup> These communiqués were unusual both for their adoption of the *takfiri* practice of declaring opponents apostates and for engaging in theological debates, suggesting Umarov again may not have authored them. On other occasions, Umarov deferred authority on religious questions to others in the movement.<sup>83</sup> These instances illustrate how non-ideological leaders can both lend authority to and borrow it from others in a movement to justify their actions.

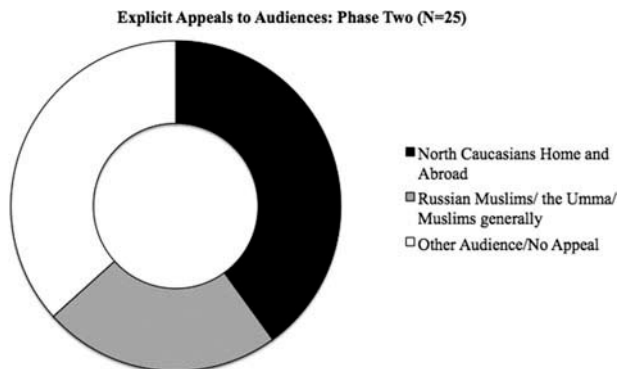
In order to further strengthen the legitimacy of the frame transformation, Umarov was at pains to stress historical continuity, claiming that, regardless of the slogans used, “every leader of the jihad spoke and acted in accordance with how he understood religion and the situation.”<sup>84</sup> Significantly—given Russia is widely perceived as having taken advantage of the 9/11 attacks to reframe the North Caucasus conflict as part of the War on Terror and those attacks “reshuffled the jihadist universe”<sup>85</sup>—Umarov explicitly linked his disillusionment with the West to the U.S. reaction to those attacks, claiming “after 2001, the infidel fully revealed its true face.”<sup>86</sup> An expanded session of the ChRI’s State Defence Council Majlis Shura held the following year—at which Maskhadov integrated foreign fighter units

into the ChRI armed forces and aligned the constitution with sharia<sup>87</sup>—formed the cornerstone of Umarov’s efforts to portray the IK as the ChRI’s legitimate heir, with Umarov claiming he was implementing its decisions.<sup>88</sup> This focus on historical continuity involved some rewriting of Umarov’s personal history, since prior to assuming the leadership he dismissed as an “FSB fantasy” an interviewer’s question implying everyone had joined the insurgency to establish sharia; instead, he said he joined the war as a “patriot” and “did not know how to pray.”<sup>89</sup>

### ***A Khattabist agenda***

The proclamation of the IK launched a new phase in Umarov’s positioning of the insurgency, “effectively signalling the end of the [ChRI] independence project.”<sup>90</sup> Defences of the decision emerged as a major theme in Umarov’s communiqués, testifying to the significance of the transformation. Russia was recast as an infidel oppressing North Caucasian Muslims with the help of traitors, not to the people, but the faith. Although traces of such framing were present in earlier addresses, the proclamation presented a starkly different overall conceptualisation of what the insurgency was fighting for and against. In this phase, goals became more opaque and Umarov shifted the emphasis away from occupation. At the same time, he rhetorically aligned the movement with jihadists elsewhere and displayed greater hostility towards the West, but without altering the overall hierarchy of enemies or undermining the focus on domestic affairs. Of 14 out of 25 communiqués appealing to explicit audiences, compared to the first phase an increasing number (seven) appealed to Muslims outside the region, although North Caucasians home and abroad still accounted for the majority (12) (see Figure 4).

Locating this second phase on the landscape of jihadist ideologies using existing typologies encounters significant difficulties. Studies of groups in Muslim-majority and predominantly Arabic-speaking countries dominate discussions of jihadism; however, the typologies drawn from them can be an awkward fit when applied to groups elsewhere. Some, for example, have utilised the “near enemy”/“far enemy” dichotomy, typically referring respectively to the Muslim rulers of the Middle East and the West and the U.S.<sup>91</sup> Yet in the North Caucasus, there are three layers of actors, not two: local Muslim rulers, non-Muslim Russia, and the non-Muslim West. The North Caucasus authorities’ lack of



**Figure 4.** Explicit appeals to audiences: Phase Two.

sovereignty is irrelevant given that typologies are based on groups' expressed political preferences. Treating Russia as the near enemy requires that one overlook the importance of religion as a key distinguishing characteristic in the original dichotomy; conceptualising it as the far enemy prevents any consideration of a transnational dimension to ideology.

Umarov's efforts to create an equivalence between the IK and jihadist insurgencies elsewhere while remaining focused on Russia reflected the ideology of Ibn Khattab, the most famous of the foreign fighter contingent to participate in the North Caucasus conflict, and may thus provisionally be characterised as Khattabism—inspired by the Palestinian ideologue Abdallah Azzam, but adapted to the circumstances in which Khattab operated and territorially bounded—and therefore distinct from the more internationalist agenda of AQ.<sup>92</sup> Locating North Caucasian adherents to Khattab's ideology within existing typologies, however, also encounters challenges. For example, a typology offered by Hegghammer distinguishes between “classical” jihadism focused on local occupiers and “global” jihadism prioritising the West, with Khattab placed in the former category. However, as Hegghammer clearly states, “classical jihadism was a doctrine for involvement in *other Muslims'* struggles of national liberation, not their own.”<sup>93</sup> By definition, therefore, Umarov cannot be a classical jihadist and the changes in Phase Two are lost in a limbo between national-jihadism and global jihadism. Equally problematic, by rooting the ideology in the identity of its adherent, such a definition means that Khattab and local actors like Umarov must be seen as pursuing different ideologies even where rhetoric, goals, and actions converge.

### Phase Three: Internationalised ambiguity (late 2010–2013)

From approximately late 2010, Umarov's framing of the conflict evolved further, demonstrating an increased engagement with the outside world. In a January 2011 communiqué justifying a suicide attack on Moscow's Domodedovo airport—an attack with a clear international dimension, given Domodedovo's role as an international transit hub and the inevitable presence of foreign nationals among the victims—Umarov articulated in-depth grievances about the deaths of fellow Muslims in countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq, accused Israel and the U.S. of breaking Sudan apart to obtain its energy resources, and denigrated the heads of Muslim states as “puppets.”<sup>94</sup> On several occasions, Umarov spoke of the “difficult times” facing the *umma*,<sup>95</sup> and he argued: “one cannot separate the situation at home from the general situation in the world.”<sup>96</sup> In May 2011, Umarov celebrated the “martyrdom” of AQ leader Osama bin Laden,<sup>97</sup> and later he offered condolences for those killed fighting elsewhere.<sup>98</sup> Such an expansion of focus served to equate the North Caucasus insurgency with conflicts elsewhere, with Umarov explicitly claiming the IK was “part of this global jihad.”<sup>99</sup>

Umarov increasingly leveraged the notion of jihad as *fard al-ayn* to appeal beyond the Caucasus, focusing in particular on “Idel-Ural” (the Volga-Urals region).<sup>100</sup> Umarov singled out this region in four communiqués from October 2010 onwards, having only previously mentioned it in the “official” version of the proclamation, indicating he viewed it as a particularly likely source of external support. The value of and reliance on obligation was evident not only in explicit references, but in the absence of an alternative basis for action. Rather than developing a separate grievance narrative or transforming an existing one, Umarov stressed religious identity as a bridging mechanism<sup>101</sup> that linked Russia's Muslims to the current narrative:

Do not be disinterested, indifferent to those events that are taking place today in the Caucasus! Here, in the Caucasus, your brothers and sisters in religion are being killed.<sup>102</sup>

Umarov also appealed to the *umma* explicitly—rather than to Muslims generally—with greater frequency, calling for prayers and support: of six explicit appeals, all but one occurred after late 2010.<sup>103</sup>

### ***Ongoing limits to internationalisation***

As before, clear limits to the transnational dimension of Umarov's ideological positioning of the movement remained. Although Umarov was hostile to the West, he made only one explicit threat to an external actor, when in November 2011 he accused Turkey of allowing Russian agents to target alleged IK personnel—including one of his relatives.<sup>104</sup> It was, therefore, an external threat with a distinctly domestic dimension. Umarov also expressed concerns when the possibility emerged that external events could negatively impact the North Caucasus. In November 2012, he complained that some people operating in Syria were falsely asserting:

there is no Jihad in the Caucasus, that Jihad in the Caucasus has finished, and therefore they supposedly arrived in Syria. No, in the Caucasus there is Jihad, and it is crueller and stronger than on the territory of Syria. No one helps or supports Jihad in the Caucasus.<sup>105</sup>

Umarov portrayed North Caucasians fighting in Syria as people unable to (re)join the insurgency at home. His comments formed part of a delicate balancing act by the IK as a whole, which sought to support groups in Syria while mitigating the potential negative impact on the domestic situation.<sup>106</sup>

It is also clear that the internal debate over the transformation continued. In a lengthy communiqué issued in August 2011 detailing discussions preceding the proclamation, Umarov emphasised what he considered to be the IK's historical legitimacy. Again referencing the 2002 Majlis, he claimed that Sadulayev had promised to "complete the transformation of the state" it initiated, but had been killed before having the chance to do so.<sup>107</sup> As late as August 2013, Umarov was still responding to questions from Chechen expatriates about whether the decision to proclaim the IK had been correct. Criticising nostalgia for Ichkeria, he highlighted the international community's failure to recognise it.<sup>108</sup> That he was still defending the proclamation to support communities six years later demonstrated its controversial nature and far-from-universal acceptance. It is also possible that internal debates over the internationalisation of the movement's position caused tensions with supporters of the Khattabist agenda even before that internationalisation was externally apparent: A major split in the leadership of the insurgency in 2010–2011 was led by Aslambek Vadalov, who fought with Khattab, and blamed by Umarov on Mukhannad, IK deputy military emir and part of the foreign fighter contingent.

Umarov highlighted the challenges posed by intergenerational change in justifying the insurgency's shift in focus, claiming that young people were "amazed" at the idea of "building out little Chechen Kuwait in the Caucasus," wanting to "understand how these plans are connected to the Qur'an and the Sunna."<sup>109</sup> In his August 2011 communiqué on the debates preceding the proclamation, Umarov explicitly acknowledged that the insurgency needed to ground its appeal in religion if it was to be successful:



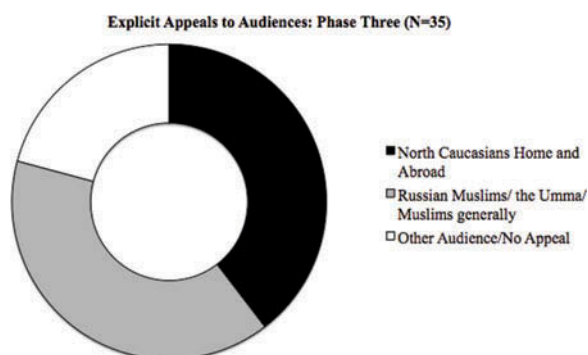
It was already evident that people would not follow us, our ranks would not be replenished under the flag of Ichkeria. . . . We were forced by the times themselves and the new generation of Islamic youth to proclaim the Emirate.

In the same address, he also referenced regional pressures, claiming that Astemirov had threatened to proclaim an emirate if Umarov failed to do so. Umarov contested that such an appeal would have resulted in a “definite split,” effectively leaving him little choice but to proclaim the IK.<sup>110</sup> These comments highlight the importance of viewing motivational framing and ideological change less as a top-down and more as a two-way, interactive process. They also suggest that a leader’s control over a movement can be maintained by ideological flexibility and accommodating demands from within the insurgency.

### ***A hybrid ideology***

Pinpointing the start of Phase Three is challenging, but, in their entirety, communiqués from late 2010 onwards appear to ideologically position the movement in a manner distinct from earlier statements. Specifically, the phase is characterised by increasingly detailed references to events outside Russia and a gradual blurring of enemy hierarchies. Whereas in both preceding phases Russia was clearly the primary enemy—with the North Caucasus authorities a distant second and, despite increasingly hostile references, the West a tertiary concern—from late 2010, the gap between these actors is much less pronounced. Umarov devoted greater efforts to elevating the IK’s status vis-à-vis other jihadist movements and afforded more space to grievances about the West’s treatment of Muslims elsewhere. He also appealed more frequently to the external communities—26 of 35 addresses identified an explicit audience, of which 19 appealed to Muslims outside the region and 19 to North Caucasian audiences (see [Figure 5](#)). Umarov thus portrayed jihad as a solution to supposedly global problems. At the same time, he did not abandon Russia as an enemy or establish goals extending beyond the Caucasus for those actually fighting in the Caucasus. When the possibility arose that events in Syria could undermine the insurgency, local concerns came to the fore and jihadism ceased to be a unified force driving towards a common goal.

This blurring of enemy hierarchies is far from unique to Umarov. Hegghammer, for example, argues that many groups now display ambiguous rhetoric and behaviour, and



**Figure 5.** Explicit appeals to audiences: Phase Three.

therefore proposes the concept of hybridisation: “the mixing of ideal rationales for violence and the attendant bleeding of their associated enemy hierarchies.”<sup>111</sup> Such ambiguity of preference is not dependent on the previous existence of clear preferences, and therefore applies even if the aforementioned flawed dichotomies are rejected. Several studies have observed this process of hybridisation elsewhere.<sup>112</sup> At the same time, the hierarchies in Umarov’s communiqués were not completely eliminated: most importantly, while he diagnosed the West as part of the problem, he did not prescribe solutions directly connecting the region and the West. Thus, Phase Three may be considered partial hybridisation, with the hierarchy of enemies and priorities blurred but not entirely discarded.

### **Weakness as a driver of ideological change**

Strain and weakness have been offered as key reasons for the process of hybridisation, allowing groups to expand their potential support base with reduced costs of alienating original supporters—since a shortage of support is precisely the problem it seeks to address.<sup>113</sup> Umarov’s communiqués and the context in which they circulated provide ample evidence to suggest that weakness was behind not just the shift from Phases Two to Three, but the entire transformation process. When Umarov assumed the leadership, the insurgency was in a perilous state: the deaths of Maskhadov and Sadulayev, coupled with a general amnesty that drained rebel ranks, left the insurgency “in a very precarious situation” and necessitated the replacement of key military and ideological leaders.<sup>114</sup> It was clear that the insurgency needed to expand its appeal if it were to survive; indeed, the very act of appealing to the broader region indicates the original support base was no longer sufficient. Religion had, historically, proven to be the best means of appealing to the wider region and provided a ready-made sense of common identity for appealing to and beyond it.

Umarov himself was initially “ostensibly a nationalist . . . pressured by those around him” to declare the IK,<sup>115</sup> and he himself testified to this pressure. However, his comments on the importance of religion to younger audiences suggest that frame transformation was necessary from more than just a geographical perspective. Managing the transition from one generation to the next is critical for ensuring the survival of groups that employ terrorism<sup>116</sup>; if religion resonated more with the younger generation than nationalist separatism, as Umarov himself claimed, then the transformation may have been critical to a successful transition, as well as to maintaining both unity and his overall control of the movement. In other words, Umarov was reacting to rather than driving the ideological change—riding a wave that might otherwise have drowned him. The persistence of irredentist framing in his first year as leader may be rooted in his own personal ideological evolution, which appeared to occur later than for the movement as a whole, and the time required for a new leadership to negotiate relations with other actors. Ultimately, however, the pressures that preceded his leadership remained and intensified, and over the course of his tenure Umarov showed himself to be a highly pragmatic leader who prioritised unity over doctrine.

### ***Perpetual weakness***

Some of the key motivational advantages offered from an increasing reliance on religion stem from its utility in downplaying or dismissing perceptions of weakness. Goals became

increasingly vague, focused on a process of eliminating Russian influence rather than the concrete result of independence, making the failure to achieve them easier to refute. Jihadist ideology allows for ultimate victory to be portrayed as “not only decades but possibly centuries in the future, [which] proves immensely supportive in prolonged asymmetric campaigns.”<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, from the start of his tenure, Umarov sought to downplay military setbacks and perceptions of weakness, and religious framing offered a means of doing so. Thus, in an early address, he claimed that there were “thousands of young people” looking to join the insurgency, but resource constraints prevented the movement from accepting them.<sup>118</sup> Later, he portrayed military inferiority as irrelevant and used it to call for strengthened commitment.<sup>119</sup> Killed fighters were eulogised as having “worthily sustained their agreement with Allah,”<sup>120</sup> helping foster a perception that they are part of “a greater struggle, a cosmic war.”<sup>121</sup> Framing the conflict as a Manichean struggle of believers versus non-believers reduced the need to offer the prospect of victory, since both defeats and victories are part of Allah’s grand plan. The transformation thus allowed Umarov to acknowledge setbacks—and thereby retain credibility—while simultaneously challenging perceptions that the cause was lost. These advantages, however, are means of spinning negatives as positives: Were the insurgency not on the back foot and experiencing recruitment problems, they would be irrelevant.

The reason for further transformation in Phase Three ultimately lies in the failure of this transformation to bring the desired results. By late 2010, the IK had lost more leading figures, including those who had been influential in shaping the IK’s ideological identity, like Astemirov and Said Buryatskiy; another key ideological adviser to Umarov, Supyan Abdullayev, was killed in March 2011. Human rights group Memorial argues security service losses declined, albeit at different rates, across the region from 2009–2010 onwards as a result of several republics adopting a differentiated (and subsequently abandoned) “new course” that employed societal dialogue and soft measures alongside security service pressure.<sup>122</sup> Umarov’s efforts to attract support in areas like Tatarstan and Bashkortostan should be viewed in the context of an insurgency struggling at home, yet there is little evidence that these appeals brought any tangible results. Thus, the pressures and rationale driving the original transformation remained in force. The most significant change in Phase Three was the attitude towards international actors, and developments in that sphere suggest that the insurgency had nothing to lose from hostility towards the West: Russia designated the IK as terrorist in February 2010 and, although the U.S. and the UN did not follow suit until mid-2011, by that point the U.S. had already designated Umarov personally, eliminating any lingering chance of international support. Meanwhile, the Arab Spring and, in particular, the conflict in Syria radically altered the situation in the Muslim world. Aligning the IK with jihadists elsewhere allowed Umarov to respond to these changes in the international environment; given the absence of alternatives, alienating the West was largely a cost-free endeavour.

## Conclusion

This article has contributed to existing work on politically violent groups and SMT by offering a case study of framing by the leader of a movement operating outside the Arabic-speaking milieu that dominates studies of jihadism. In doing so, it has highlighted several

limitations of existing typologies and concepts used to classify radical Islamic ideologies. Furthermore, it has offered insights into how a non-ideological leader can respond to ideological tensions within his movement and argued that weakness appears to be a key factor in the increasing internationalisation of the overall ideology. The flexibility and pragmatism demonstrated by Umarov is an option more readily available to non-ideological leaders and offers an interesting contrast to his successor, Aliaskhab Kebekov: Although impossible to prove, there are grounds for suggesting that Umarov would have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State on behalf of the entire IK in order to maintain unity, rather than enduring the splintering of the movement that occurred under Kebekov's more ideological leadership.

By systematically analysing the communiqués of the IK's founding leader and taking a first step towards restoring the IK's voice to a debate over ideology dominated by secondary sources, this article has also enriched existing literature on the North Caucasus insurgency. The article has demonstrated the value of treating statements collectively, examining nuances and variance in how a leader frames problems and solutions, and attempts to mobilise audiences. In each of the phases identified, Umarov ideologically positioned the movement in a manner distinct from other phases, yet these changes are only clear when communiqués are assessed in their communicative context. Some concepts, such as characterising the conflict as jihad, are present throughout Umarov's tenure and reveal nothing of the shifts that occurred. Ideas and preferences also rarely appear fully formed; as such, traces of them can be found outside the phases in which they are dominant, and identifying emergent ideas may help understand potential changes in ideological direction. By contrast, looking at concepts and themes in isolation risks misdating ideological change—and therefore misidentifying its causes—and losing sight of the importance of prioritisation.

Several avenues for further research emerge from this study. Firstly, a key conclusion is that the IK's ideology *as articulated by Umarov* continually evolved. Although Umarov's status as leader makes this change suggestive of a broader ideological evolution, the voices and actions of other actors within the IK clearly warrant consideration before firm conclusions can be drawn. This is especially true since Umarov's repeated defence of the proclamation points to tensions. There is also obvious space for exploring in greater depth the reasons behind the transformation and how rhetorical changes relate to insurgent activities and capacity and changes in the broader political environment. This article has taken a necessary first step, but many more remain for the IK's ideology to be fully understood.

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## Notes on contributor

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## Notes

1. Jihadist is used here to refer to “forms of Islamist militancy defined above all by a commitment to violence ostensibly in the name of Islam” (Jeevan Deol and Zaheer Kazmi, “Introduction: Jihadi Worlds,” in *Contextualising Jihadi Thought*, edited by Jeevan Deol and Zaheer Kazmi [London: Hurst & Company, 2012], 1). This is preferred to the more widely used term of Jihadi-Salafism, referring to the violent strand of a broad movement adhering to literalist interpretations of Islamic scripture and advocating a return to a golden age of Islam (Roel Meijer, ed., *Global Salafism: Islam’s New Religious Movement* [London: Hurst & Company, 2009]). As Gilbert Ramsay points out (*Jihadi Culture on the World Wide Web* [London: Bloomsbury, 2013], 52–53), this term is problematic in that it refers to “two quite different groupings of religious and social phenomena”; key “jihadist” thinkers such as Abdallah Azzam were not Salafis according to at least one of them; and groups like Hamas suggest the existence of a distinctly non-Salafi jihadism. Equally problematic, labelling all violent Islamic actors as Jihadi-Salafi places theology at the centre of understanding of their beliefs and behaviours, since a Jihadi-Salafi so defined cannot, for example, be indifferent to interpretations of scripture. In reality, such actors can and often are unaware of or disinterested in theological debates. Locating these actors on a Salafi spectrum is therefore a problematic starting point for discussions of ideology.
2. See Alex P. Schmid, “The Revised Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 6, no. 2 (2012): 158–59.
3. James Hughes, *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
4. Moshe Gammer, “Separatism in the Northern Caucasus,” in *Volatile Borderland: Russia and the North Caucasus*, edited by Glen E. Howard (Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2011), 87.
5. Cerwyn Moore and Paul Tumelty, “Foreign Fighters and the Case of Chechnya: A Critical Assessment,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31, no. 5 (2008): 412–33; Cerwyn Moore, *Contemporary Violence: Postmodern War in Kosovo and Chechnya* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2010).
6. Gammer, “Separatism in the Northern Caucasus” (see note 4 above), 88.
7. Moore and Tumelty, “Foreign Fighters” (see note 5 above).
8. Julie Wilhelmsen, *When Separatists Became Islamists: The Case of Chechnya* (Kjeller, Norway: Farsvrest Farsknings Institute, 2004).
9. Moore, *Contemporary Violence* (see note 5 above).
10. Hughes, *Chechnya* (see note 3 above), 105.
11. Ilyas Akhmadov and Miriam Lanskoj, *The Chechen Struggle: Independence Won and Lost* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
12. Gilbert Ramsay and Donald Holbrook, “The Representation of Violence by Insurgent Political Actors: The ‘Violent’ Part of Violent Extremism?,” *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 7, no. 1 (2015): 84–96.
13. Jeroen Gunning, “Critical Reflections on the Relationship Between Ideology and Behaviour,” in *Contextualising Jihadi Thought*, edited by Deol and Kazmi (see note 1 above), 220.
14. Gary A. Fine and Kent Sandstrom, “Ideology in Action: A Pragmatic Approach to a Contested Concept,” *Sociological Theory* 11, no. 1 (1993): 24.
15. C. J. M. Drake, “The Role of Ideology in Terrorists’ Target Selection,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 10, no. 2 (1998): 53–85.
16. Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín and Elisabeth Jean Wood, “Ideology in Civil War: Instrumental Adoption and Beyond,” *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2014): 213–26.
17. Gunning, “Critical Reflections” (see note 13 above).
18. E.g., Cerwyn Moore, “Suicide Bombing: Chechnya, the North Caucasus and Martyrdom,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 64, no. 9 (2012): 1780–1807, and edited works by Moshe Gammer, ed., *Ethno-Nationalism, Islam and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder* (London:

- Routledge, 2008); Galina Yemelianova, ed., *Radical Islam in the Former Soviet Union* (London: Routledge, 2010).
19. E.g., John O'Loughlin, Edward C. Holland, and Frank D. Witmer, "The Changing Geography of Violence in Russia's North Caucasus, 1999–2011: Regional Trends and Local Dynamics in Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 52, no. 5 (2011): 596–630; Monica Duffy Toft and Yuri M. Zhukov, "Islamists and Nationalists: Rebel Motivation and Counterinsurgency in Russia's North Caucasus," *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 2 (2015): 222–38.
  20. Gordon M. Hahn, *The Caucasus Emirate Mujahideen: Global Jihadism in Russia's North Caucasus and Beyond* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014), Kindle Version, Loc. 6605.
  21. Domitilla Sagramoso, "The Radicalisation of Islamic Salafi Jamaats in the North Caucasus: Moving Closer to the Global Jihadist Movement?," *Europe-Asia Studies* 64, no. 3 (2012): 593.
  22. Aurélie Campana and Jean-François Ratelle, "A Political Sociology Approach to the Diffusion of Conflict from Chechnya to Dagestan and Ingushetia," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37, no. 2 (2014): 115–34; Aurélie Campana and Benjamin Ducol, "Voices of the 'Caucasus Emirate': Mapping and Analyzing North Caucasus Insurgency Websites," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27, no. 4 (2015): 679–700.
  23. See, for example, Brian Glyn Williams, "Allah's Foot Soldiers: An Assessment of the Role of Foreign Fighters and Al-Qa'ida in the Chechen Insurgency," in Gammer, *Ethno-Nationalism* (see note 18 above) and Toft and Zhukov, "Islamists and Nationalists" (see note 19 above).
  24. For example, Campana and Ducol, "Voices of the 'Caucasus Emirate'" (see note 22 above).
  25. Sagramoso, "The Radicalisation of Islamic Salafi Jamaats" (see note 21 above).
  26. Thomas Hegghammer, "Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries? On Religion and Politics in the Study of Militant Islamism," in Meijer, *Global Salafism* (see note 1 above), 259.
  27. Robert D. Benford, "An Insider's Critique of the Social Movement Framing Perspective," *Sociological Inquiry* 67, no. 4 (1997): 410.
  28. See the work of Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, e.g., "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611–39.
  29. Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2006), 75.
  30. Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes" (see note 28 above).
  31. Quintan Wiktorowicz, ed., *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004), 172.
  32. Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism* (see note 31 above), 16.
  33. Pamela E. Oliver and Hank Johnston, "What a Good Idea! Ideologies and Frames in Social Movement Research," *Mobilization* 4, no. 1 (2000): 39.
  34. Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements* (see note 29 above).
  35. E.g., Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism* (see note 31 above); Michael Page, Lara Challita, and Alistair Harris, "Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula: Framing Narratives and Prescriptions," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23, no. 2 (2011): 150–72; Joas Wagemakers, *The Quietist Jihadi: The Ideology and Influence of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Donald Holbrook, *The Al-Qaeda Doctrine: The Framing and Evolution of the Leadership's Public Discourse* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
  36. Although versions of Umarov's proclamation of the IK are frequently cited, his other statements feature less often. However, the neglect is most evident in the underuse of primary sources compared to (often partisan) secondary sources. For example, both Robert Schaefer, *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger Security International, 2011), 240–41 and Murad Batal al-Shishani, "The Rise and Fall of Arab Fighters in Chechnya," in *Volatile Borderland: Russia and the North Caucasus*, edited by Glen E. Howard (Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2011) discuss the ideology without citing any insurgency-produced material.
  37. Holbrook, *The Al-Qaeda Doctrine* (see note 35 above).
  38. I am grateful to Dr. Cerwyn Moore for raising this point.



39. Communiqué #1, “Obrasheniye prezidenta ChRI Dokki Umarova,” June 23, 2006, <http://web.archive.org/web/20110226183503/http://www.chechenpress.org/events/2006/06/23/01.shtml>. The author possesses a transcript, either source-provided or self-produced, of all communiqués.
40. Communiqué #1; Communiqué #6, “Obrasheniye Prezidenta ChRI v svyazi s 15-y godovshchinoy Dnya Nezavisimosti ChRI,” September 6, 2006, <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2006/09/06/46881.shtml>.
41. Communiqué #12, “Dokka Umarov: ‘My ne ustanem, i terpeniye nashe ne issyaknet,’” February 23, 2007, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070302224942/http://www.chechenpress.org/events/2007/02/23/07.shtml>. See also Communiqué #1; Communiqué #6; Communiqué #7, “Dokka Umarov: ‘Vse resheniye prinyimayutsya v Chechne,’” September 12, 2006, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070501004122/http://www.chechenpress.info/events/2006/09/12/02.shtml>; Communiqué #13, “Dokka Umarov: ‘Poslaniye k srazhayushchimsya mususlmanam Kavkaza i ugneennym musulmanam Rossii,’” March 5, 2007, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070307121624/http://www.chechenpress.org/events/2007/03/05/04.shtml>; Communiqué #14, “Intervyu s Dokkoy Umarovym,” March 7, 2007, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2007/03/07/49883.shtml>.
42. Communiqué #5, “‘My nachinali borbu s nadezhday na Allakha...,’” August 22, 2006, <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2006/08/22/46643.shtml>; Communiqué #17, “Dokka Umarov: ‘Delo Islama i nashey svobody v nadezhnykh rukhakh,’” July 3, 2007, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2007/07/30/52105.shtml>.
43. Communiqué #1.
44. Communiqué #5.
45. Communiqué #1; Communiqué #3, “‘My ne somnevayemsiya v nashey podebe...,’” July 9, 2006, <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2006/07/09/45783.shtml>.
46. Communiqué #1.
47. Communiqué #3.
48. Communiqué #12.
49. Communiqué #3.
50. Communiqué #13.
51. Communiqué #9, “Prezident ChRI pozdravil musulman s nastupleniyem Ramadana,” September 23, 2006, <http://web.archive.org/web/20061011064513/http://www.chechenpress.info/events/2006/09/23/04.shtml>.
52. Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements* (see note 29 above), 79.
53. Jeni Mitchell, “The Contradictory Effects of Ideology on Jihadist War-Fighting: The Bosnia Precedent,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 9 (2008): 819.
54. Moshe Gammer, *The Lone Wolf and the Bear: Three Centuries of Chechen Defiance of Russian Rule* (London: Hurst & Company, 2006), 213–14.
55. Cerwyn Moore and Paul Tumelty, “Assessing Unholy Alliances in Chechnya: From Communism and Nationalism to Islamism and Salafism,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 25, no. 1 (2009): 73.
56. E.g. Hegghammer, “Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries?” (see note 26 above), 258–59.
57. Mitchell, “The Contradictory Effects of Ideology” (see note 53 above), 815–16.
58. It is beyond the scope of this article to fully explore alternative classifications, which require consideration of actors across settings. Those proposed are therefore tentative and warrant further elaboration.
59. Snow et al. identify frame transformation as involving redefining already meaningful activities and events to match a new framework and attach new meanings (“Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,” *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 4 [1986]: 474).
60. Communiqué #19, “Komy vygodna provokatsiya pod nazvaniyem ‘Kavkazskiy Emirat,’” October 28, 2007, <https://web.archive.org/web/20071029154558/http://www.chechenews.com/news/117/ARTICLE/2806/2007-10-28.html>; Communiqué #21, “Ofitsialnyy reliz



- zayavleniya Amira Dokki Umarova o provozglashenii Kavkazskogo Emirata,” November 20, 2007, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100727205951/http://generalvekalat.org/content/view/14/30>.
61. Communiqué #29, “Dokka Umarov: ‘Pobeda prikhodit tolko k terpelivym,’” <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2007/12/30/55392.shtml> (accessed February 23, 2008).
  62. Communiqué #19; Communiqué #21; Communiqué #32, “VIDEO: Amir Dokka Abu-Usman i Sheykh Said Buryatskiy obratilsya k musulmanam,” June 19, 2008, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2008/06/19/58973.shtml>; Communiqué #45, “Intervyu Amira Imarata Kavkaz Dokku Abu-Usman,” February 14, 2010, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/02/14/70668.shtml>.
  63. Communiqué #19; Communiqué #21.
  64. Communiqué #27, “Otvét Amira Dokki Umarova protivnikam provozglasheniya Imarata Kavkaz: ch.2,” December 30, 2007, <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2007/12/30/55392.shtml>.
  65. Communiqué #19; Communiqué #21.
  66. Communiqué #19; Communiqué #21.
  67. Communiqué #26, “Otvét Amira Dokki Umarova protivnikam provozglasheniya Imarata Kavkaz: ch.1,” December 30, 2007, <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2007/12/30/55392.shtml>; Communiqué #31, “VIDEO: Dokka Umarov provel soveshchaniye Shury Yugo-Zapadnogo Fronta VS IK,” April 27, 2008, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2008/02/23/56540.shtml>; Communiqué #45.
  68. Communiqué #19; Communiqué #21.
  69. Communiqué #19; Communiqué #21.
  70. Communiqué #45.
  71. Communiqué #47, “Zayavleniye Amira Imarata Kavkaz Dokku Abu Usmana. 29 marta 2010,” March 31, 2010, <http://hunafa.com/?p=2885>.
  72. Suicide attacks need to be analysed at the individual, organisational, and environmental level (Assaf Moghadam, “Defining Suicide Terrorism,” in *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom*, edited by Ami Pedahzur [London: Routledge, 2006], 81–107).
  73. Communiqué #35, “Amir Abu Usman i Sheykh Said Buryatskiy: Otvety na voprosy,” December 17, 2008, <http://hunafa.com/?p=681>.
  74. Communiqué #33, “Ofitsialnoye zayavleniye Komandovaniya Imarata Kavkaz v svyazi s agressiyey Rossii protiv Gruzii,” August 13, 2008.
  75. Communiqué #35; Communiqué #45; Communiqué #65, “Obrashcheniye Amira IK Dokku Abu Usmana k musulmanam Kavkaza i Rossii: ‘Srazhaytes s vragama vezde, gde dostanet vasha ruka!,” March 3, 2011, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2011/03/03/79721.shtml>.
  76. Communiqué #19.
  77. Communiqué #21.
  78. Communiqué #19.
  79. Cerwyn Moore, “Foreign Bodies: Transnational Activism, the Insurgency in the North Caucasus and ‘Beyond,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27, no. 3 (2015): 401.
  80. Communiqué #73, “Shamil sprosil menya: ‘kogda ty stanesh Amirom, ty obyavish Imarat?,” August 30, 2011, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2011/08/30/84755.shtml>.
  81. Communiqué #26.
  82. Communiqué #26; Communiqué #27.
  83. See, for example, Umarov deferring authority to IK ideologist Said Buryatskiy in Communiqué #35.
  84. Communiqué #19; Communiqué #21.
  85. Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created: The Myth of the Taliban —Al Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan, 1970–2010* (London: Hurst & Company, 2012), 326.
  86. Communiqué #35.
  87. Moore and Tumelty, “Assessing Unholy Alliances” (see note 55 above).
  88. Communiqué #31.

89. RFE/RL, "RFE/RL Interviews Chechen Field Commander Umarov," July 28, 2005.
90. Moore and Tumelty, "Assessing Unholy Alliances" (see note 55 above), 88.
91. Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
92. For a detailed treatment of Khattab's ideology, see Moore, "Foreign Bodies" (see note 79 above).
93. Thomas Hegghammer, "'Classical' and 'Global' Jihadism in Saudi Arabia," in *Saudi Arabia in Transition: Insights on Social, Political, Economic and Religious Change*, edited by Bernard Haykel, Thomas Hegghammer, and Stephane Lacroix (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
94. Communiqué #64, "Amir IK Dokku Abu Usman: 'Spetsoperatsiya v Moskve byla provedena po moyemu prikazu,'" <https://archive.org/details/ObrawenieAmiraDokkiVSvjaziSShahidskojOperaciejVMoskve24.01.2011> (accessed February 7, 2011).
95. Communiqué #77, "Amir Imarata Kavkaz Dokku Abu Usman: Otvety na voprosy," April 15, 2012, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2012/04/15/90012.shtml>; Communiqué #87, "Amir IK Abu Usman: Obrashcheniye. Voprosy i otvety. Ramadan 1433 god (2012 g.)," August 28, 2012, <http://hunafa.com/?p=10403>; Communiqué #92, "Amir IK Dokku Abu Usman: 'Obrashchayus k vam s zemel Dzhikhada,'" July 10, 2013, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2013/07/10/99134.shtml>; Communiqué #93, "Amir Imarata Kavkaz Dokku Abu Usman: Otvety na voprosy," August 8, 2013, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2013/08/08/99752.shtml>.
96. Communiqué #93.
97. Communiqué #70, "Amir Dokku Abu Usman o bin Ladene, Imarate Kavkaz i poteryakh modzhakhedov," May 17, 2011, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2011/05/17/81607.shtml>.
98. Communiqué #90, "Obrashcheniye amira Imarata Kavkaz Dokku Abu Usmana k rodstvennikam mudzhakhidov," June 29, 2013, <http://hunafa.com/?p=15021>; Communiqué #93.
99. Communiqué #91, "Amir IK Dokku Abu Usman otmenil moratoriy na operatsii v Rossii i prozval ne dopustit olimpiady v Sochi," July 3, 2013, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2013/07/03/98961.shtml>.
100. Communiqué #61, "Modzhakhedy pered pokhodom. Obrashcheniye Amira Imarata Kavkaz Dokku Abu Usmana v syavzi Iyd al-Adkha," November 25, 2010, <https://abrorinfo.wordpress.com/2010/11/25/modzhaxedy-pered-poxodom-obrashhenie-amira-imarata-kavkaz-dokku-abu-usmana/>, <http://ia601409.us.archive.org/4/items/ObrawenieAmiraIkDokkuAbuUsmanaVSvjaziIjdAl-adha/>.
101. Frame bridging at the individual level involves linking an organisation to "unmobilized sentiment pools or public opinion preference clusters" that may share grievances but are not organised (Snow et al., "Frame Alignment Processes" [see note 59 above], 467).
102. Communiqué #81, "Amir Imarata Kavkaz Dokku Abu Usman prizval musulman Rossii k Dzhikhadu!," May 22, 2012, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2012/05/22/90742.shtml>.
103. Communiqué #9, "Prezident ChRI pozdravil musulman s nastupleniyem Ramadana," September 23, 2006, <http://web.archive.org/web/20061011064513/http://www.chechenpress.info/events/2006/09/23/04.shtml>; Communiqué #54, "Zayavleniye Amira Imarata Kavkaz Dokku Abu Usmana. Ramadan 1431 god (2010 g.)," September 9, 2010, <http://islamdin.com/video/907-1431-2010-.html>; Communiqué #56, "Amir IK Dokku Abu Usman nazval glavnogo vinovnika fitny sredi modzhakhedov," September 27, 2010; Communiqué #77; Communiqué #83, "Obrashcheniye k bratyam Amira IK Dokku Abu Usman: 'Bolshe net putey—libo k musulmanam, libo k kafiram,'" June 29, 2012; Communiqué #84, "Amir IK: Vspominayte nas v vashikh molitvakh!," August 24, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PKxCnIAVfA>.
104. Communiqué #75, "Obrashcheniye Amira IK k turetskomu narodu i pravitelstvu," November 20, 2011, <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2011/08/30/84755.shtml>.
105. Communiqué #89, "VIDEO. Obrashcheniye Amira Imarata Kavkaz Dokku Abu Usmana k modzhakhedam Sirii," November 20, 2011, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2CJr\\_cx19I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2CJr_cx19I).

106. See Mark Youngman, "Between Caucasus and Caliphate—The Splintering of the North Caucasus Insurgency," *Caucasus Survey*. Advance online publication. doi:[10.1080/23761199.2016.1215055](https://doi.org/10.1080/23761199.2016.1215055).
107. Communiqué #73.
108. Communiqué #93.
109. Communiqué #70.
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111. Thomas Hegghammer, "The Ideological Hybridization of Jihadi Groups," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 9 (2009): 8.
112. Bryce Loidolt, "Managing the Global and Local: The Dual Agendas of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34, no. 2 (2011): 102–23; Page, Challita and Harris, "Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula" (see note 35 above).
113. Hegghammer, "The Ideological Hybridization of Jihadi Groups" (see note 111 above), 1.
114. Campana and Ratelle, "A Political Sociology Approach" (see note 22 above), 122.
115. Moore and Tumelty, "Assessing Unholy Alliances" (see note 55 above), 73.
116. Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Oxfordshire, UK: Princeton University Press, 2009).
117. Mitchell, "The Contradictory Effects of Ideology" (see note 29 above), 818.
118. Communiqué #3.
119. Communiqué #12.
120. Communiqué #90.
121. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd ed. (London: University of California Press, 2003).
122. Memorial, "Kontrterror na Severnom Kavkaze: Vzgl'yad pravo-zashchitnikov. 2014 g.—per-vaya polovina 2016 g.," [http://memohrc.org/sites/default/files/doklad\\_severnny\\_kavkaz.pdf](http://memohrc.org/sites/default/files/doklad_severnny_kavkaz.pdf) (accessed June 7, 2016).